

## From landscape resources to landscape commons: focussing on the non-utility values of landscape

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**Abstract:** Landscape is increasingly conceptualized as a resource. We argue that although a resource-based approach may be positive in terms of conservation outcomes, focusing on use value does not do sufficient justice to the many complex facets of landscape. Reiterating the Florence Declaration on Landscape, which considers that “landscape is a common good”, we suggest that the conceptualization of landscape as a commons will resolve the discrepancy. However, a conceptual shift towards a more holistic commons-based approach requires a detailed understanding of the different values of landscape. Based on a phenomenological conceptualization of the landscape, this article explores the theoretical roots of the definition of the different values of landscape. It distinguishes between use, existence (e.g. aesthetic) and intrinsic values. This exercise is not an end in itself, but is intended to establish a theoretical framework promoting a dialogue between these values and show how they complement each other. A precise understanding of the different landscape values contributes not only to the conceptualization of landscape as a commons, but also to a better understanding of real-life landscape conflicts. Drawing on the empirical example of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site in Switzerland, the article demonstrates that, in practice, landscape conservation projects that avoid deadlock succeed in striking a balance between the three conceptions of landscape value.

**Keywords:** Conflicts, existence value, intrinsic value, landscape commons, phenomenology, use value

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## 1. Introduction

Landscape is increasingly conceptualized as a resource.<sup>1</sup> This approach gained international recognition when it was adopted by the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000), which asserts that landscape “constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation”. This move towards a resource-based conception of landscape is widely presented as a necessary stage in the consideration of its sustainable management. In this article, we argue that although the resource-based approach may be positive in terms of conservation outcomes, focusing on *use value* does not do sufficient justice to the many complex facets of landscape and – more pragmatically – to the resolution of landscape conflicts. In other words, landscape has other values that the resource-based approach cannot properly apprehend. Reiterating the Florence Declaration on Landscape (UNESCO 2012), which considers that “landscape is a common good”, we suggest that the conceptualization of landscape as a commons<sup>2</sup> will resolve the discrepancy. This conceptual shift from a resource-based to a commons-based approach requires a detailed understanding of the different *values* of landscape and their relationships with each other.

The value of landscape is difficult to apprehend theoretically; as a result, disparate lists of values are often produced inductively. “Preservation and conservation work often unfolds amid unstated or undertheorized assumptions about the importance of conserving things” (Bluestone 2000, 65). Many methods have been proposed for appraising the value of landscape (Hayden 1995). Formalized landscape assessments generally rely on predetermined criteria (aesthetic, historic, scientific, etc.) to appraise landscapes. Typically, this procedure is followed by landscape assessments as defined in national laws or policies (Stephenson 2008). Such approaches may lead to an impoverished understanding if they rely on the assumption that values always accord with predetermined typologies (Dakin 2003, 190). Alternatively, landscape value definitions can also be derived from public participation processes (Brown and Brabyn 2012).

The different *use* values of landscape are commonly used to characterize landscapes (Stephenson 2008). Aesthetic, symbolic or identity values are also

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment is actively promoting a shift “from environmental policies to resource policies” (Ott and Staub 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Although “*the* common good” can also refer to the idea of the general interest (Sgard 2010), this is not the meaning conveyed by the Florence Declaration on Landscape, which refers to landscape as “*a* common good”, i.e. as a commons. To avoid possible confusion, we use the term “commons” in this article (except in citations).

the focus of many landscape assessments (Junge et al. 2015; Klein et al. 2015). Intrinsic value is not addressed in most cases; it tends to be associated with traditional conservation philosophies or intellectual elites (Serageldin 2000). However we will stress its importance in the analysis of landscape-related conflicts as well. The concept of the commons plays a central role in this respect.

Commons is a polysemous concept (Harribey 2011). In the narrower sense of the word, commons – understood as common pool resources<sup>3</sup> – refers to “a natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large as to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits to its use” (Ostrom 1990, 30). Once extracted, resource units are not available to other users anymore (subtractability) (McGinnis 2011). In a broader historical context, commons are managed by collective institutions which constitute the opposite of enclosures (Polanyi 1944). They represent a bulwark against private appropriation that paves the way for commodification and marketization. Consequently, commons symbolize the collective, the inalienable and the irreplaceable (Bollier and Helfrich 2013). This is why they are “so socially and politically contested” (Olwig 2003).

In view of the growing importance of the resource-based approach to evaluating landscapes and the conceptual difficulties that often arise when non-use values are associated with a resource-based appraisal, this article aims to go back to the theoretical roots of the definition of the different values of landscape. This exercise is not an end in itself, but is intended to establish a theoretical framework that promotes a dialogue between these values and shows how they complement each other. The article also aims to demonstrate how a precise understanding of the different landscape values can contribute to the conceptualization of landscape as a commons, and how such a concept can be used empirically to reach a better understanding of landscape conflicts. In particular, we argue that a negotiated balance needs to be found between the preservation of the resource-based value of the landscape (use value) and other non-utility values that may be attributed to it.

Our considerations are divided into five main sections. Following a brief presentation of the definitions of the landscape used in the article, we discuss both the advantages and limits of a resource-based conception of the landscape (Section 2). We then do the same for a non-utility conception of the landscape (Section 3) and arrive at a proposal for greater landscape sustainability based on the linking of these two approaches (Section 4). We then illustrate this proposal based on the case of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site (Section 5). We conclude with a discussion on the merit of appraising landscapes as commons rather than resources (Section 6).

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<sup>3</sup> One of the major contributions of Ostrom and her school has been to demonstrate the importance of distinguishing commons from the institutions that govern them – the common-pool resource institutions (CPRI). Based on this, it was possible to demonstrate that CPRI are not worse than private or public property per se when it comes to the management of the environment, thereby rehabilitating a type of institution that was often considered a relic of the past by modern scholars (Ostrom et al. 2002).

## 2. The resource-based approach to landscape

### 2.1. Definition of landscape

Numerous approaches to landscape exist, not only in geography but also in other disciplines (Jones 1991; Stephenson 2008). The adoption of a holistic approach to landscape is often hindered by the incompatibility of landscape-related theory and methodology (Tress and Tress 2001). In this article we basically differentiate between four conceptions of the cultural landscape, which we refer to in the rationale presented below.

According to *the culturalist approach associated with the visual arts and representation*, the landscape corresponds to the recognition by the spectator of elements observed in nature and the matching of these elements with ‘schemata’ that result from a process of intellectual permeation by the representations produced by all creative activities, but painting and photography in particular (Roger 1997). This conception of the landscape is perfectly illustrated in the characteristic ‘visual culture’ of the English eighteenth century (Williams 1989; Matless 1993, 1996). From the perspective of the proponents of the culturalist approach, landscape is appraised mainly visually with the help of culturally-constituted lenses. It is not possible to truly see, it is only possible to see ‘as’: the landscape is admired through frame views similar to paintings. In the context of the culturalist definition of the landscape, the latter is a cultural fact which is solely the concern of the human subject who experiences it. Hence the apprehension of the landscape depends above all on mechanisms for the recognition of previously internalized schemata (Reichler 2002).

Contemporary thinking on landscape calls for a move beyond static understandings and for the inclusion of movement, social practice, and time. We refer below to these approaches as *historical and cultural geography approaches*. According to the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000), “‘Landscape’ means an area, *as perceived by people*, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” (our italics). The perception of landscapes and the use made of them varies over time, depending on the individuals and groups involved (Antrop 2005). Accordingly, the assessment of the ‘beauty’ or the ‘ugliness’ of a landscape varies (Beza 2010). “At the time when the code of classical beauty was almost universally dominant, [...] the sea was ugly, the mountains were ugly, forests were ugly, the desert was ugly, vastness was ugly, unlimited and unframed expanses were ugly. From the time when the codes became intertwined, things became complicated” (Corbin 2001, 94). As with the culturalist approach, Cosgrove (2001) focuses on the view of the landscape, albeit with the aim of demonstrating the power relations and ideology that shape the landscape. The idea of power is also at the heart of the Marxist analysis of the landscape: while human labour and relations of domination shape the landscape over the centuries, other interests try to erase these traces by focusing exclusively on the scenic value of the landscape (Mitchell 2003).

Cultural geographers also focus on landscape’s subjective and experiential aspects (e.g. Meinig 1979; Tuan 1979; Jackson 1989); the landscape can also be

understood from the perspective of *phenomenology*, which is inspired by the philosophy of Husserl (1982), Heidegger (1996) and Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964). Contrary to the culturalist approach, for which landscape is primarily reduced to a phenomenon of visual recognition, phenomenology insists more on the sensory experience (Straus 1963, 1966) or on the physical experience (Sauer 1965). This link between man and nature is constantly renewed and unique on every occasion. Furthermore, the phenomenological approach of environmental aesthetics also stresses that, like all relationships with the environment, the relationship with the landscape involves a “somatic engagement” (Berleant 1992, 166), which activates all of the senses and not only visual perception. This extension is also based on the ecological approach to perception formulated by James Gibson (1979) using the concept of *affordance*. The latter is used by several authors today (for example Heft 2010; Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014; Menatti and Casado da Rocha 2016) to express the cultural and social dimension of the landscape with its ecological basis. Hence it enables the reconciliation of the cultural and phenomenological approaches to landscape conceived as a processual reality.

The theory of landscape developed by the French geographer and landscape specialist Augustin Berque (1990, 2000, 2013) attempts to integrate the different approaches explained above. According to Berque, the “milieu” is the space that surrounds a society, in which this society acts, and whose biological, political etc. affect the society in turn. The milieu is “the relationship that links a society with space and with nature”; as such “this relationship is both physical and phenomenal” (Berque 2000, 48). The milieu is just as much shaped by the activities of humans as it shapes human behaviour itself (Antrop 2005); it materializes the relationship between a society and space and nature. Based on this, Berque defines the environment and landscape as the two constituent dimensions of the milieu. The environment corresponds to the physical and factual dimension of the milieu while the landscape refers to the interpretation made of this physical and factual dimension. Given that it is never possible at any time to definitively separate these two dimensions from each other, the landscape is – in other words – the phenomenological, sensory and symbolic dimension of the milieu.

## 2.2. The significance of the resource-based approach

The utility approach to the landscape is based on the conception of landscape as a resource.<sup>4</sup> The understanding of the landscape as a resource is justified by pragmatic considerations, according to which the landscape is subject to different kinds of over-exploitation which pose a threat to its continuing existence and, therefore, its sustainability.

<sup>4</sup> According to a constructivist and relational perspective, “resources are not automatically viewed as factors with an inherent use-value and predetermined application. [...] The use-value of a resource depends upon the social context within which goals and capabilities are shaped” (Bathelt and Glückler 2005, 1547).

The resource concept focuses on the resource ‘users’ (Hunziker et al. 2008) and indirectly channels the attention to all of the actors who gravitate around the users, irrespective of whether they exploit, destroy, protect, provide access to, regulate etc. the resource (Gerber and Knoepfel 2008). Each actor acts on the basis of the leeway granted to him or her by the rules (institutions) and values (norms) of the society in which he or she lives (Vatn 2009). The resource-based approach prompts the analyst to ask about these rules and values when the condition of the resource is under threat, thereby opening the door to the consideration of legal and institutional means leading to its conservation (Herlin 2004).

If the landscape is the sensory and symbolic manifestation of the milieu, it creates a relationship of meaning, which is constantly being renegotiated, between communities and their physical and biological environment (Berque 2013). The existence of the landscape involves two partners – the human communities and nature – and the preservation of this link relies on both. In theory it is possible to identify two diametrically opposed scenarios in relation to the preservation of this relationship. One can either act on the human subject so as to ensure that, through a process of awareness-raising, his or her expectations correspond to the reality of the constantly changing landscape, or one can shape the landscape so that it corresponds to the subject’s expectations. In terms of regulation, the former case would be characterized by ‘letting-go’ (*laisser-aller*). This position, which is frequently inspired by post-modern considerations, starts from the perspective that it is artificial to want to stop the evolution of the landscape – an attitude considered as ‘conservative’ – and that people should be allowed to build constantly updated links of meaning with their environment. “We do not yet know how to see our industrial complexes, our futurist cities, the landscape power of a motorway. [...] Every face of nature has the enduring possibility of being seen as poetic” (Roger 1997, 113–114).

The opposite point of view advocates a consumer approach to the landscape (based on the pleasure provided by a landscape) and can be deployed sometimes in the context of natural parks. With the “acceleration in time” that accompanied the industrial revolution and the increasingly rapid development of our ways of life, the everyday and banal object becomes exotic in less than a generation (Donadieu 1994). Conservation and placing under protection involves putting something apart with a view to attempting to exclude it from the real and symbolic effects of time (Pearce 2000).

### 2.3. The limits of the resource-based approach

Neither of the two extremes of non-intervention in the landscape nor its absolute protection satisfy the criterion of sustainability. In the first case, human beings are very likely to become distanced from a milieu that is changing too quickly, and their relationship of meaning with the milieu will suffer as a result. In the second case, we cannot speak of conserving the landscape when the placing of areas under protection with a view to conserving them springs

from the inability to recognize the process involving the constant updating of how users interpret their experience of the landscape. The associated risks of museumization, idealization of the past and ‘Disneyfication’ ensue (Augé 1997; Sgard 2010; Nelson 2013). What is involved here is a representation that no longer responds to a criterion of ‘authenticity’ in the sense that it involves a caricature of the landscape.

In reality, these two situations are rooted in the same conceptual confusion because, as already noted, the resource-based approach is centred on the ‘user’ of the landscape. By placing the emphasis on the use of the landscape as a cultural resource and, accordingly, the repository of meaning it constitutes, the actor-user risks obliterating the fact that the relationship with the landscape constitutes first and foremost the *experience* of an environment. And it is this experience that is constantly updated by a human subject which makes the milieu a *singular* landscape. The latter becomes unclassifiable, so to speak, because it is fundamentally unique. The resource-based approach tends, therefore, to disregard the unique character that the landscape has by definition as an object of an experience. The actor-users are mindful of aspects of one landscape that may also be presented by another. The landscape as a resource is *particular* in the sense that it shares common characteristics with other landscapes. When a singular landscape is replaced by a particular landscape, one of the two above-described situations results: (1) we see either the adoption of a ‘*laisser-aller*’ approach to the landscape, which fails to see it as a truly singular object because the rapidity of the change of milieu prevents the users of truly experiencing it: or (2) we observe a process of rigidification of the living landscape and its fixation in a representation which has the fatal result of its museumization or Disneyfication. Both of these situations are at odds with landscape conservation.

### 3. The non-utility approach to the landscape

We will now demonstrate the contribution of the conceptual distinction between the particular landscape and singular landscape to the debate surrounding landscape conservation.

The non-utility approach to the landscape refers to a highly diversified research field, whose origins go back to the 18th century in Europe at least and which has been developed in recent decades in British and American philosophy, in particular in connection with the environment.<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.1. The significance of the non-utility approach

The non-utility conception of the relationship with the landscape makes it possible to provide conceptual clarification of certain stumbling blocks associated with the aforementioned resource-based approach. As we have seen, the latter priori-

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<sup>5</sup> For a general overview of the leading theorists of the field, see Carlson and Lintott (2007) and Carlson and Berleant (2004).



tizes the perspective of the human subject, that is the point of view of the users of the landscape. It could be said that, in contrast to this, the non-utility approach to the landscape focuses more on the landscape as an object. When it is a question of consuming the landscape for the pleasure it provides – which is precisely one of the variants of the resource-based approach – what presents a value in itself is the human experience of the landscape. And the latter is only a *means* of experiencing pleasure. Its visual representation, for example, or another landscape that is more or less similar could provide as much pleasure in principle. In other words, within the resource-based approach, the landscape is the object of an experience that can easily be *substituted* by another which is likely to produce the same effect.

The non-utility approach goes further. In order to understand it, we need only refer to modern aesthetics – for instance the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant. This considers the pleasure felt through the experience of the landscape as being essentially aesthetic in nature, i.e. it is *disinterested* in the sense that the object of the (aesthetic) pleasure is no longer a means to an end (pleasure) but an end in itself. Furthermore, this finality of the aesthetic object is perceived *without us representing its purpose to ourselves*. These are the two characteristics that Kant identified in all natural features that we evaluate as beautiful (Kant [1790] 1987).

Seen from this perspective, the landscape is no longer simply a resource, and the value we attribute to it is not solely a use-related value intended to satisfy our interests. The aesthetic relationship with the landscape leads to its valuation in its own existence as a singular object that cannot be substituted, irrespective of the fact that we are incapable of justifying our judgement of it. Thus we have moved on from the *use* value of the landscape to what we call its ‘*existence value*’, a relational value which is closely associated with a first-hand experience of the landscape – an aesthetic one in this instance (other existence values exist – affective, symbolic, patrimonial, identity etc. – that are derived from the singular experience of a landscape). This is an existence value in that the (intrinsic) value of the experience is closely linked with the existence of the landscape in question (Hess 2013, 61–84). If the landscape were different or were to change suddenly, the quality of the experience would no longer be the same either; it would no longer be the experience of *this* landscape but the experience of a different one.

However, if the singular landscape is indissociable from an experience, the judgement relating to it can be conceived as purely reflective or determining. Kant ([1790] 1987) was of the view that aesthetic judgement can only be reflective; it does not qualify the object of the experience but the state of the human subject in relation to this object. As we shall see below, an entire school of thought was initiated and developed by the philosopher Allen Carlson (2000), who sought to demonstrate that the aesthetic appreciation of the environment qualified the object of the experience – hence, to use Kant’s terminology, the judgement is also determining. The judgement is determining in that it qualifies the object of the experience. The state of the subject of the experience was henceforth informed by the knowledge of naturalists, ecologists, geologists, experts in natural history etc. in relation to the object. For example, it is legitimate to believe that a person con-



fronted with an over one-thousand-year-old sequoia will have a different – more suitable or appropriate – aesthetic experience when informed of the age of the tree. In this case, the aesthetic judgment qualifies the object itself.

When applied to the landscape, this approach makes it possible to avoid the stumbling blocks associated with the resource-based approach in that it seeks to identify a category of value – the existence value – of a landscape that is conceptually distinct from use value. However, difficulties arise when the practical consequences are drawn from the two versions in which this approach presents.

### 3.2. The limits of the non-utility approach

By highlighting the subjective relationship between each individual and the landscape, the non-utility approach faces a new difficulty. This consists in *collectively* defining recognized landscape conservation objectives. This section opens up avenues for going beyond the contradictions between a subjectivist interpretation of the relationship with the landscape and the social imperatives of landscape conservation.

Within the subjectivist paradigm, concrete landscape conservation projects inevitably collide with the limits of the debate on aesthetic quality, on which its conservation is likely to be based. This kind of quality is always subjective, not only in the sense that it involves an individual experience but above all in the sense that there is no objective reason for this experience to be imposed on the others: according to the non-utility approach of a subjectivist order, every aesthetic evaluation of the landscape has its legitimacy.

Continuing the Kantian tradition, for example, the German philosopher Martin Seel maintains that, as Kant also believed, without being entirely private, aesthetic evaluation does not qualify the object but the subjective perception of this object. Of course, the latter acknowledged that every aesthetic assessment claims to be universally valid but remains nonetheless subjective. As Seel (1996, 285–286) points out: “the judgement in relation to an aesthetics of nature [...] is an intersubjective judgement *without* an objective component”. This aspect differs from the judgement of a work of art as, in this case, the appreciation claims to have a form of objectivity; there is an *objective component* that may be justified by the debates of the art critics and historians. According to Seel, this form of intersubjectivity for objective purposes does not exist in relation to the aesthetics of the landscape.

Based on this subjectivity of the appreciation, it is unlikely, therefore, that an aesthetic judgement of a landscape will be shared by others. When seeking a rational basis for ensuring landscape sustainability within the non-utility approach, we encounter the individual views of different people, all of which are also authorized. It follows that within the framework of this subjectivist interpretation of the non-utility approach, practically intractable conflicts will be identified in the debates surrounding the conservation of and damage to the landscape.

Nonetheless, it is possible to avoid such a consequence by adopting the objectivist perspective of the non-utility approach as described earlier. This involves

the belief that there is, in fact, an objective component to the aesthetic appreciation of nature. To do this, as proposed by Carlson's cognitivist aesthetics, it is possible to refer to the scientific knowledge provided by geology or ecology, for example. As confirmed also by the above-presented culturalist approach to the landscape, the aesthetic judgement of a landscape would then be similar to that of a work of art: it could claim to be relevant precisely because it is based on an objective fact. Although it can claim to describe the object of the experience in this instance, it can encounter another stumbling block, however.

What happens on the conceptual level when the aesthetic appreciation of the landscape is informed by scientific knowledge, in other words, when a landscape may be described objectively as beautiful? In this case – to remain within the perspective of modern aesthetics advocated by Kant –, the pleasure provided by the object of experience is disinterested, that is to say the object of the pleasure is an end *in* itself. However, in addition, it is also an end *through* itself, so to speak, in the sense that the scientific (geological, ecological, naturalist etc.) knowledge (to which the historical, sociological psychological etc. knowledge could be added) that enables its characterization forms the basis of its aesthetic appreciation. This is precisely the point of view defended by Carlson's aesthetics. To say of a landscape that it is an end in and through itself tends to objectivize it as though it possessed the characteristics of its objective aesthetic appreciation within itself. Hence, the landscape no longer only assumes an – always subjective – existence value based on the fact that the judgement that it expresses is reflective: its value is, from now on, *intrinsic* or epistemically objective (Hess 2013, 61–84) because the aesthetic judgement in relation to it is determining, that is it is justified by the scientific knowledge of the object.

To be clear, the expression “intrinsic value” refers here to the objectivity of aesthetic value at the *epistemic* level, in the sense that this value is no longer dependent on the individual interests, mood or feelings of the subject. Nevertheless this value is in fact *ontologically* subjective, because it is attributed to the landscape by a subject through his/her experience of the landscape. As Bluestone (2000, 66) puts it: “Buildings, landscapes, and material culture do not have an intrinsic value apart from culture”.<sup>6</sup>

The radical objectivization of the landscape resulting from a focus on its intrinsic value only presents the considerable risk of congealing it – in terms of both space and time – by dissociating it from the interaction with humans, of which it is, however, the phenomenal manifestation. This risk is averted when the

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<sup>6</sup> It should also be noted that all that is involved at this stage is the clarification of the aesthetic state of the landscape, as the aesthetic judgement is informed by scientific knowledge. Hence this state is not (yet) moral; to be moral it would make sense to formulate reasons that would enable the *moral* evaluation of the landscape, that is the reasons that would prompt people to make it an object of moral consideration (Rolston 2002; Hettinger 2008). This is a task which, in this context, is the responsibility of non-anthropocentric environmental ethics (Brennan and Lo 2015).

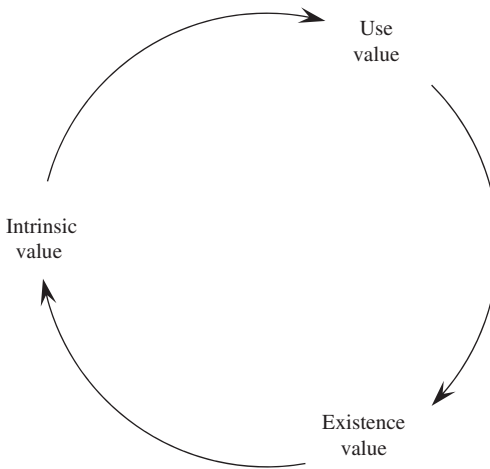
scientific knowledge is considered as a more or less faithful reflection of reality rather than a human construct in its regard.

A suggestive illustration of the damaging effects of this kind of conception of the relationship between humans and nature can be found in the environmental thinking of the American philosopher Eugene C. Hargrove. The latter explicitly subscribes to the extension of cognitivist aesthetics. However he radicalizes it by considering that the scientific categories that accommodate an objective aesthetic appreciation of nature ultimately only reflect what happens in the actual creative process of non-human nature. He basically says that existence precedes essence in non-human nature (Hargrove 1989): nature itself produces the criteria of good and beautiful. The consequence of this is that the human being can only be something that disturbs this natural beauty – of a resolutely wild nature – by inevitably making an essence of its existence. When applied to the landscape, this conception returns, ultimately, to the museumization of the landscape. Of course, it is no longer a question of congealing it in a representation (essence) as is the case in the resource-based approach, but of congealing it in its unique reality (existence), a reality that humans disturb as soon as they try to participate in it.

It appears, therefore, that the non-utility approach to the landscape faces as much difficulty in avoiding the outcomes, of which we accused the resource-based approach, i.e. the museumization or idealization of the landscape. And, just as the resource-based approach is confronted with the ‘letting go’ of the landscape, when the non-utility approach endeavours to circumvent this problem, it must confront the problem of intractable conflicts surrounding the use of the landscape. Thus, in all cases, it would appear, to say the least, difficult to ensure landscape sustainability within the different proposed theoretical frameworks if they are considered independently of each other.

#### 4. Proposal for a circular landscape evaluation process

The linking of the different ideas presented thus far enables us to propose a new contribution to the conceptualization of landscape sustainability. As we have seen, the resource-based approach demonstrates the use-related values of the landscape in the sense that it provides sense of meaning to the actors involved. For its part, the non-utility approach primarily concerns the existence values of the landscape – in particular aesthetic values – which promote the existence of the landscape as a singular entity for an actor. It then identifies the intrinsic value of the landscape, expressing the value of the landscape in its singular reality in the judgement of the actors concerned. As the development of the non-utility approach showed, these three concepts of the value of the landscape – use value, (aesthetic) existence value and intrinsic value – complement each other mutually while correcting each other’s negative effects. Thus the establishment of landscape sustainability involves the deployment of what we propose to call the “circular landscape evaluation process” (cf. Figure 1).



*Figure 1: The circular process of landscape evaluation. The line of argument used in the political debates about the landscape is often reductive in that it refers to one of the landscape values, that is of giving pleasure. In doing this it focuses the debate implicitly on the use value and excludes the other (existence and intrinsic) values.*

To ensure the sustainability of a landscape, we can start with the resource-based approach and the use values that it enables us to identify. The Figure 1 shows however, as already stated, a consumption-based attitude to the landscape that is driven by pleasure tends to reduce the landscape to an idealized representation which leads to its museumization or Disneyfication. To avoid such an outcome, actors can easily swing to the opposite extreme, i.e. to ‘letting the landscape go’, which has the perverse effect of eliminating all possibility of identification with and appropriation of the milieu by the actors as it is subject to constant change. Both of these consequences of the resource-based approach result in the neglect of the individual, unique aspect of a landscape.

Taking this irreplaceable, singular aspect of the landscape into account means that the actors must grant an existence value to the landscape which is closely linked with their own landscape experience. This enables them to experience the singularity of the landscape, particularly through their aesthetic appreciation of it. Accordingly, the attribution of this existence value by each of the actors makes it possible to counteract the perverse effects of the resource-based approach. In effect, it is added to the use values which the actors are likely to attribute to the landscape. By taking it into account, the actors can avoid a landscape being denatured to the point that it is transformed into an entirely different landscape.

However, the fact remains that this existence value is variable from one actor to another and exposed to the subjectivity of individuals and their always varying experiences. As a result, in the face of the different uses made of the landscape by

the actors, the (aesthetic) existence value has little hope of leading to landscape sustainability by itself. This is due to the absence of political and social consensus among the actors on what should continue to exist and, therefore, be conserved. This is why we attempted to show that by acknowledging that landscape has an intrinsic value beyond its use and experience values, it becomes possible to move on from a subjective conception of landscape aesthetics. This approach is not without risks, however, as the attribution of an intrinsic value to the landscape risks congealing it in its singular reality and turning it into an object 'under glass' which is incompatible with human life and the activities it involves. In the extreme case this would ensure the programmed death of the landscape – not as a result of the disappearance of the natural environment but due to the elimination of all relationships of meaning.

The only way of avoiding this stumbling block is to return to the resource-based approach. This makes it possible to ensure that the landscape remains a living entity which is subject to the constantly updated reappropriation by the actors. Hence, the landscape is capable of evolving while remaining singular. We believe that this can only arise under the condition that this change takes place within the limits that the actors impose on themselves in recognizing that the landscape has both an (e.g. aesthetic) existence value and an intrinsic value.

The above-proposed circular model of landscape evaluation clearly aims to go beyond the classical, dual approach which sustains the debates on landscape conservation. This is often based on an opposition between a resource-based conception and a non-utility vision of the landscape. It reflects an exclusively "either/or" logic – either the landscape is used or not used – without ever conceiving that both options could be legitimate. In contrast, the circular model is integrative or holistic in the sense that it equally applies the three categories of value in the evaluation of a landscape, thereby enabling them to rectify each other.

Finally, the circular evaluation model requires that the actors agree to impose restrictions on their use of the landscape without renouncing its use. Hence it offers a means of conceiving how it would be possible to see a landscape as a commons if the actors who live in it and shape it comply with use restrictions arising from considerations other than purely utilitarian ones, i.e. aesthetic (Lascoumes and Le Bourhis 1998). When political consensus legitimizes the application of a circular landscape evaluation process, the use, existence and intrinsic values are applied equally; thus it becomes possible to evade the logics of appropriation and individual interests which are likely to destroy its reality.

In the next section, we illustrate our proposal for the conception of landscape evaluation as a circular process based on the example of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site in Switzerland.

## 5. The case of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site

The debates surrounding the strengthening of the protection afforded to the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site provide a perfect illustration of the ten-

sions that can arise between the different ways of understanding the value of the landscape.<sup>7</sup>

A particular feature of Switzerland's system of direct democracy is that allows interest groups and political parties to launch national or cantonal popular referendum initiatives with a view to prompting political debates on social issues that are not otherwise dealt with directly in political circles. Such processes led to three cantonal referendum initiatives, the three "*Sauver Lavaux*" ("Save Lavaux") campaigns of 1977, 2005 and 2014. The last of these initiatives, which aimed to establish greater protection for the Lavaux vineyards, was ultimately rejected by 68.1% of the electorate in 2014 (e.g. *La Côte*, 18.05.2014). The debate that preceded this defeat of the initiative basically involved a confrontation between the supporters of increased protection, who were attempting to fight the pressure arising from property development and the resulting insidious change in the area, and their opponents. The latter feared that increased protection would create obstacles to economic and social activity in the region (tourism, viticulture, commercial activity, agriculture etc.) and a loss of autonomy on the part of its municipalities. Thus the situation involved a confrontation between the two above-presented landscape approaches, i.e. the resource-based approach, which views the landscape through the prism of its use value, and the non-utility approach which sees it as a common heritage in terms of its existence and intrinsic values.

The Lavaux region has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2007. However, it was granted legal protection as far back as the 1970s, and from 2005 it was the subject of an article in the new constitution of the canton of Vaud of 2003. At the time of the referendum, the protected area had a population of around 14,000 inhabitants and 78% of its total area was zoned as unavailable for development. A large proportion of area consisted of vineyards, 2% of public utility areas (schools, car parks etc.) and 20% of area zoned for development (Cantonal executive council 2014, 5). The instigators of the initiative believed that property development represented a threat that would result in irreversible damage to the area; they proposed the extension of the protected area to new areas bordering the site and the banning of all new development apart from a few rare exceptions.

The supporters of the initiative clearly supported a museum-based approach to the landscape. But is this based on an ideal representation of the Lavaux site resulting from a discourse on the past and the scenic character of the region? Or did the museum-based approach adopted by the instigators of the initiative rest on the perception of the site's singularity? In fact, article 1 of the Act on the Conservation of the Lavaux Site of 1979 referred to "conserving the identity and characteristics of Lavaux" (art. 1, Law on the protection plan of Lavaux 1979), in other words its singularity. Among the instigators of the initiative, the inter-

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<sup>7</sup> The empirical material presented in this section is mainly based on an analysis of legal documents and journal articles published in the context of three cantonal referendum initiatives aimed at protecting the vineyard landscape. It is also the outcome of both authors' subjective confrontation with this landscape as they live in Lavaux site.

pretation of this objective basically encompassed two elements: the beauty of the site and opposition to the pressure of property development (Ulmann 2013, 2014). The first of these relates to an existence value of an aesthetic nature and the second to an intrinsic value, in that the aim of the instigators was to prevent all new construction within the boundaries of the area's towns and villages (art. 4 para. 3 of the text of the initiative). Thus the aim was more or less to conserve the existing buildings and infrastructure as though they only served the purposes of contemplation and visiting but not habitation.

Our framework for the analysis of landscape values makes it possible to demonstrate that the supporters of the initiative constructed the debate on the reinforcement of the protection of Lavaux by placing two concepts, i.e. the non-utility approach with its existence and intrinsic values and the resource-based approach with its use values, at the opposite ends of an axis. Rather than consider that the (aesthetic) existence value and intrinsic value of the site must be viewed within a dynamic in which the use values are of equal legitimacy, they championed a conception based on the conservation of the Lavaux landscape that would lead to its museumization. In other words, the resource and non-resource approaches were envisaged on the basis of a linear opposition processes between the two; this perspective is based on a binary logic which directs landscape evaluation in the direction of an insoluble conflict between the landscape actors. In this article we assert that, on the contrary, a circular process for the evaluation of the Lavaux site would have facilitated dialogue between the resource-based and non-utility approaches, which would favour the reciprocal correction of the bias that results from the translation of the two value systems into practice.

By way of illustration, we will review some of the points of conflict that arose in the debates surrounding the different referendums. The argument centred on the 'Disneyfication of the landscape' (*Le Nouvelliste*, 28.01.2012) refers to the handiwork of the inhabitants and promoters who stage their landscape by creating 'tradition' and the archaic on a modern basis. The most striking example of this practice is that of concrete vineyard walls which are covered with cladding that is made to look like dressed stone. In this case the resource-based value of the landscape is clearly highlighted as these practices are based on the theory that a copy (even a badly made one) will have the same effect as the original landscape.

The 'placing under glass' comparison was used extensively in the local press (e.g. *Le Matin*, 18.05.2014) to criticize those who would like to protect the landscape in its 'original' state. This protection strategy aims to prohibit all new development activity within the protected area with a view to fighting all possible change. In this line of argument, the perpetuation of the intrinsic value of the landscape is highlighted by the protagonists. Through the conservation measures they advocate, they enter into conflict with the inhabitants who, through an identity-based attachment with their region, prioritize an existence value, the identity value of the landscape which is understood as a living space which they have appropriated over the course of their own lives and those of their families. Accordingly, as they see it, the landscape should remain a living one, in other



words it should continue to provide a stage for economic production processes (O'Neill and Walsh 2000). They fight to avoid 'overprotection'. Although it is based on fundamentally different values, this line of argument is close to and interlinked with the argument put forward by the defenders of the landscape's use.

As evidenced by the successive generations of protection plans from 1979, the recourse to three popular initiatives, the need for the cantonal executive council to adopt a position in a counter-project to the initiative, the aesthetic existence value of the landscape was the subject of numerous political debates. Based on its analysis, the success of the counter-project developed by the cantonal executive council and accepted by a majority of 68.5% in the referendum of 18 May 2014 is specifically due to a circular process of evaluation of the Lavaux area. Moreover, it demonstrates the difficulty that exists in arbitrating between different types of landscape values. On the one hand, in its memorandum addressing the voters (Cantonal executive council 2014, 11), the cantonal executive council admitted that the Lavaux site is under threat from the pressure of property development. It acknowledged, therefore, that the Lavaux landscape has an intrinsic value and that it needs to be conserved. However, according to the council, this protection would not be provided by an almost complete ban on construction as a number of human activities – starting with viticulture, the activity that had shaped this landscape for hundreds of years – had to be given sufficient leeway to develop and thereby ensure the endurance of the site. In this sense, the position adopted by the cantonal executive council reflected the desire of a large proportion of the population for the Lavaux site not to be subject to a logic of private appropriation without restrictions. Hence we would suggest that in doing this, it extracted this part of the territory from purely mercantile considerations and subsumed it *de facto* under the category of the commons.

Figure 2 visualizes the conflict that distinguished the supporters of the initiatives from its opponents in terms of the circular model of landscape evaluation, implemented – intentionally or unintentionally – by the cantonal executive council. The outer circle shows the binary logic underlying the debate between the resource-based approach and the non-utilitarian approach to the Lavaux site. This differs from the resource-based approach in two ways: first by defending the existence values (aesthetic, heritage) of the Lavaux site and, second, by referring to an intrinsic value (aesthetic) which is reflected in the desire to prohibit any change to the site. The circle itself illustrates how the use, existence and intrinsic values attributed to the site correct the excesses arising from the dualistic opposition between the resource-based and non-utilitarian approaches.

The case of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site illustrates the fact that the lively discussion about the preservation of the terrace vineyards actually made use of concepts originating in two different theoretical approaches to the landscape. We have attempted to demonstrate that the sustainability of the landscape is promoted through a concept for its conservation that does not set the resource-based approach in opposition to the non-utility approach. On the contrary, it

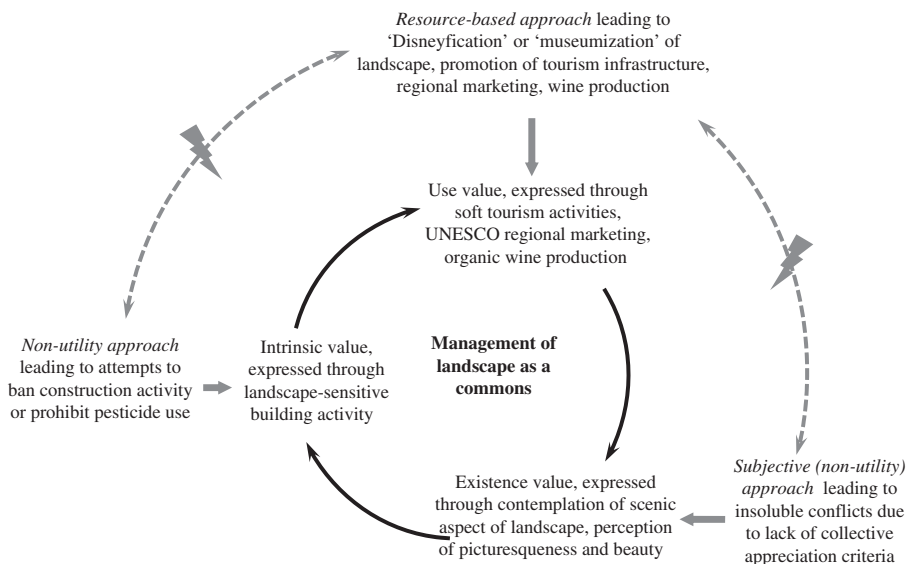


Figure 2: The circular process of landscape evaluation as applied to the case of Lavaux. From landscape conflicts based on binary oppositions between competing ways of evaluating landscape values (outer circle), a shift toward a circular (holistic) evaluation strategy (inner circle) makes it possible to trigger a dialogue between landscape values.

strives to make use of both approaches while balancing out the faults of one with the advantages of the other in a circular evaluation process.

## 6. Discussion – landscape as a commons

In this article, we used the concept of commons to broaden the resource-based approach to landscapes. We claimed that a landscape commons is a resource whose non-utility values have been discovered and acknowledged. The recognition of the importance of non-utility values of landscape has profound implications for the analysis of landscape conflicts; it involves a shift in emphasis towards three essential processes that arise in contested landscapes:

1. A process of collective appropriation by concerned actors which goes beyond exclusive private appropriation strategies. While property titles secure individual rights to the *use* of the resource, commons “empower people to be co-proprietarians and co-stewards of their commons” (Bollier and Helfrich 2013). This is in-line with the findings of neoinstitutionalist scholars studying the commons: the long-term functioning of a common-pool resource institution (CPRI) implies a sense of collective ownership of the resource (Ostrom 1990, 2010). Mattei (2013) goes even further:

according to him, commons are resources that belong to the people “as a matter of life necessity”. In the Lavaux case study, this view is reflected in the law: according to the understanding of the cantonal authorities, the Lavaux landscape cannot only be *used*: because of its intrinsic and existence values, landowners, wine-growers, other inhabitants and visitors all need to make sacrifices for the greater good and future generations. However, it is notoriously difficult for the law to grasp the complexity of landscapes, which by definition extend beyond individual plots of land and administrative boundaries: in most cases, the collective dimension of landscape conflicts with the exclusive appropriation of resources that materializes in the institution of private property (Gerber and Knoepfel 2008).

2. A process of political decision-making involving forms of collective or participatory management. Recognizing the different values of landscape is a first step towards acknowledging the legitimacy of actors who express alternative opinions. Actors fight not only to protect their (use) interests, but also and more fundamentally to promote their values (Sabatier 1998). The commons-based approach transforms the landscape into a political issue. “[T]hese commons tend to carry meanings that draw upon earlier notions of shared resources and regulatory regimes expressing participatory forms of governance” (Olwig 2003). The landscape becomes an issue of democracy among all actors who derive sense from the landscape or assign meaning to it. Conversely, negating the collective dimension of landscapes is also a political strategy of those who prioritise its use value and aim to ensure that their particular interests prevail. While the use value of landscapes is put forward by powerful economic interests (e.g. the tourism industry), the defence of non-use values is by definition economically less profitable – at least in the short run. The initial focus of much of the neoinstitutionalist literature on relatively simple CPRI with model character (following rational choice approaches) might have led to underresearch power issues shaping the political decision-making procedures on the management of the commons (Theesfeld 2011; Kashwan 2015). Framing landscape conflicts in terms of value helps uncover power games surrounding the definition of the political objectives to follow in governing landscape commons.
3. A process of collective identity-building justifying the demands for the political recognition of the symbolic, inalienable and irreplaceable nature of the landscape. “From a philosophical and epistemological point of view, ‘landscape as a common good’ means sharing political and environmental values, which are important and determinant for the building of the identity of societies” (Menatti 2014, 41). The questioning of the different values of the landscape results in an assessment that goes beyond managerial considerations about its use or utility value. A commons-based approach to landscape can serve to retain a sense of proportion and to

balance competing interests; it relates decision-making with larger causes and other important issues (Lascoumes and Le Bourhis 1998, 44). The issue of cultural identity linked with the management of the commons is a topical factor explaining the long-term functioning of CPRI, receiving increasing attention from neoinstitutionalist scholars studying CPRI (Cox et al. 2014).

Each of these three processes – collective appropriation, collective decision-making and collective identity-building – stresses the long-term dimension of landscapes when they are appraised as commons. Hence the commons concept echoes the current discussions on the links between landscape and sustainability (Sgard 2010). In line with the UNESCO Florence Declaration on Landscape which “proposes a holistic idea of landscape, that is universal and global and, at the same time local, as it entails a respectful approach to the difference and the diversity of identity of places”, the commons-based approach to landscape may be the one that is best suited to apprehending the social reality of landscape values (Menatti 2014, 41). The notion of world heritage, as promoted by the UNESCO label, stresses the inalienability of the landscape and aims to protect it against disruptive uses, such as excessive marketization, in the name of values other than utilitarian ones.

## 7. Conclusion

The resource-based conceptualization of the landscape has the great merit of giving the landscape political visibility. This approach provides an important tool for the promotion of better landscape management. In practice, it often comes down to describing landscape conflicts as the product of struggles between opposing interests. If it is merely a matter of ‘interests’, why do the actors not manage to find a compromise solution given that this would be in their ‘interest’? Taking into account that landscape conflicts often end in deadlock leading to the breakdown of negotiations, this article aims to go beyond a resource-based approach to the landscape and questions the very conceptualization of landscape value.

The primary contribution of this article consists in demonstrating the limits and even risks inherent in an exclusively resource-based approach to the landscape, which is primarily based on the concept of a use value or utility value (Maruani and Amit-Cohen 2013). The same objective is adopted by many studies that attempt to integrate symbolic, aesthetic or identity values into landscape appraisals, thereby demonstrating a practical need to go beyond a use-based approach to landscapes (Nohl 2001; Stephenson 2008; Beza 2010; Klein et al. 2015). The second contribution of this article is that it demonstrates not only that the value of the landscape is not limited to its utility dimension, but primarily that, far from being a purely theoretical exercise, an understanding of the non-utility values of the landscape – the existence value and intrinsic value – makes it possible to analyse not only the motivations of the actors involved in landscape

conflicts better but above all the basis of their arguments. Our third contribution resides in presenting the outline of a circular model for establishing a dialogue between the three identified values, that is the use, existence and intrinsic values, which can provide a better account of the complex process of landscape evaluation. The landscape projects that succeed in practice are those that manage, consciously or unconsciously, to establish a dialogue between the three concepts of landscape value.

This leads us to the conclusion that the proposed theoretical framework based on a circular evaluation of landscape values can usefully contribute to the conceptualization of landscape as a commons. A phenomenological understanding of the landscape invites us to move beyond the reductionist opposition between the subject and the object, which predominantly leads to considerations on landscape's use value. It helps us remember that commons cannot be reduced to resources that can be appropriated. Because it can accommodate all three types of values, the commons expresses a qualitative relation with nature. A phenomenological approach to the landscape stresses that we are *part* of it. As Mattei (2013, our italics) puts it, we should understand "to what extent we *are* the commons, in as much as we are part of an environment, an urban or rural ecosystem. Here, the subject is part of the object". Through its different values, landscape as commons is inseparably linked with communities and the individuals who composes them.

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